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A SCOTCH ASYLUM FOR THE INSANE.

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Insanity is a disease that visits so many households that I am sure that some of your readers will be interested in an account of the method of management and treatment pursued in one of the Scotch asylums. I therefore send some extracts from the annual report for 1880, of the Barony Parochial Asylum, at Lenzie. It was built in 1875 by a wealthy parish of Glasgow, and is one of the finest structures for the purpose in Great Britain. Having myself had the opportunity of visiting it just before its opening, I can speak intelligently of the perfection of its arrangements and the excellence of its equipment. Furthermore I had an opportunity of making the acquaintance of its superintendent, Dr. Rutherford, and can testify to his ability and zeal. He was selected for the position on account of his successful management of the Argyll and Bute Asylum, where his peculiar methods had been conceived and put in practice.

The report was sent me by an English physician, who is also superintendent of a large institution. The letter accompanying it has this language: "I have lately had occasion to go to Glasgow, and I spent two days with Dr. Rutherford, at Lenzie. His asylum is my beau-ideal of what an asylum should be. In case you do not get his reports, I send you a copy of the last. I can vouch for the correctness of his statements."

The average number of patients in the asylum, sometimes known as Woodilee, during the year was 470.

The ratio of recoveries to admissions was 44 per cent., a proportion that compares very favorably with the recoveries in American asylums. So, too, the death-rate compares favorably with that of our hospitals.

On this point Dr. Rutherford remarks:

"A year has again passed without the occurrence of any serious accident to patients or attendants; indeed, no untoward event of any kind has occurred to disturb the harmony of the Institution. The weather was very favorable to the health and comfort, particularly of the male patients, who spend their time chiefly out of doors. The fine weather and abundant out-door exercise have had an undoubted influence on the results of treatment. It is noteworthy that the death-rate of males has been the lowest on record (8.1), and the recovery rate the highest (52.1 per cent.) It is rare in an asylum to find the male death-rate lower than the female, but during the past year this has been the case. It seems attributable to the circumstance that, amongst the men, no death occurred from consumption or pneumonia, diseases which caused six deaths amongst the females. There is little doubt that consumption is a disease of indoor and sedentary life, and that its absence as a cause of mortality amongst the 330 males is, to a certain extent, due to the abundant outdoor exercise which they have enjoyed.

"The most important event of the year has been the purchase of the adjoining farms of Muckroft and Fauldhead, by which 178



acres have been added to the available resources for the outdoor employment and recreation of the patients. From this I anticipate the best results, both from a curative and from a financial point of view. The additional land will be cultivated by the labor of the patients, with little, if any, addition to the existing number of horses and ploughmen. The farm staff has not been increased during the past five years, while the land has been more than doubled in extent. The pecuniary results, therefore, can scarcely fail to be advantageous, and I hope this will soon be apparent in the diminished cost of the maintenance of the patients.

"But it is rather as a great and beneficial means of treatment that this extension of the asylum grounds is to be regarded. With 382 acres of land surrounding the asylum, there can be no lack of means of employment for the patients, and of such a kind as cannot fail to still further develop those principles of treatment in which this asylum has taken a decided lead, and stands out prominently among similar Institutions in the country. Although Woodilee draws its patients from a large commercial and manufacturing city, and receives 200 new cases yearly, a large proportion of whom are of the acute, dangerous and suicidal class, yet a visitor may go through the whole house without seeing any of these disagreeable manifestations of excitement and fury so often associated with restraint, confinement and idleness; while in the grounds all the men who are physically able will be found with their attendants working together like ordinary laborers.

"One hundred and fifty of the men are regularly employed at outdoor work in parties of eight or ten, each under the care of an attendant. The number of ordinary resident attendants is seventeen. Twelve of these, and three non-resident attendants, regularly accompany and work with the patients, under the direction of the chief outdoor attendant, whose duty it is to regulate and supervise all work other than the ordinary cultivation of the farm and garden, which is conducted under the surveillance of the farm steward and the gardener. Five attendants remain indoors, and, along with twelve able-bodied patients who occupy themselves as house-cleaners, perform all indoor duties under the direction of the chief indoor attendant. The proportion of attendants to patients is certainly not greater than would be required were the patients treated on the old system of confinement in airing courts and with locked doors.

"The nature of the work necessarily varies with the season of the year. It consists of

the cultivation of the farm and garden, together with ordinary estate work, such as road-making, planting, fencing, draining, quarrying, building, etc. In quarrying, building, and conveying the materials, about forty men and their attendants have been regularly employed during the past two years, and the value of the work of the two years has been estimated by Mr. John Duncanson, a leading Glasgow builder, and a member of the Board, at £741 4s. 3d. It is not easy to put a price on the work done by the other 100 men, but it is in its way proportionately valuable.

"Besides the 150 men who thus work out of doors under the care of ordinary attendants, and the 12 able-bodied men who act as house-cleaners, about 30 are employed as tailors, upholsterers, storekeepers, shoemakers, bakers, plumbers, blacksmiths, painters, joiners, engineers and stokers, under skilled artisans, who are required primarily for necessary tradesman's work in connection with the Institution, and are attendants only in the sense that they employ the patients of their respective trades.

"Many years ago I used to adopt short hours of work, and had the patients more in the house, but my experience is that it is more satisfactory to keep to the hours that working men are accustomed to, as it makes the work more natural and real."

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"This full employment of the patients renders it possible to give greatly extended liberty, and to do away with all remaining forms of mechanical or chemical restraint, such as walled courts, locked doors, stimulants, narcotics and sedatives.

"No airing court or enclosed space of a like nature has ever existed at this asylum. The doors from the wards open directly into the grounds, and the whole estate is the patients' exercising ground.

"From fuller employment and increased liberty, with their accompanying diminished manifestation of insane acts, there proceeds a greater capacity for self-control. On this principle, all the doors of this asylum were originally constructed to open with ordinary handles and without a key. An unfortunate accident occurred shortly after the opening, due to a patient escaping, not through a door, but through a window, and it was considered prudent to alter those doors opening to the grounds by removing the inside handle. Two years ago these locks were restored to their original condition, and the asylum has, as your Committee are aware, since been conducted with open doors, with fewer accidents, a smaller proportion of attendants, and with fewer attempts at escape than formerly. It is with pleasure that I am able to say that

many Scotch asylums are now conducted largely on the open-door system, and some of them very largely; but Woodilee is so far as I am aware, the only public asylum which is conducted *entirely* on the open-door system, for in it there is not even a closed ward where so-called refractory patients are confined. It is to be remembered that this condition of matters exists in an asylum building situated within 90 yards of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway, which passes for three-quarters of a mile through the grounds, fenced by a light iron railing, and along which 195 trains pass daily.

"From the same causes the use of wine and spirits is gradually diminishing. During the past year their use has been almost entirely confined to newly admitted cases, chiefly females. The actual quantity used was 4 bottles of whisky for the males, and 16 bottles of whisky and 12 bottles of wine for the females. Beer is not used as an article of diet, water only being drunk by the patients and attendants at dinner. Forty gallons of new milk is consumed daily; it constitutes the chief element of sick diet.

"Sedative and narcotic drugs have not been used except as an occasional draught at bedtime, in cases where sleep could not otherwise be obtained. The actual num-

ber of patients who have received draughts does not exceed 12. I have long been of the opinion that stimulants and narcotics are rarely necessary in the treatment of insanity when conducted on these principles."

The report also gives extracts from the reports of the Scotch Commissioners of Lunacy, of visits made at two different periods of the year, confirming the good results of Dr. Rutherford's management. These gentlemen mention that there were no cases where restraint was applied and but three instances of seclusion during the year, and these three for short periods. It is also mentioned incidentally that "the whole visit was made without opening a door with a key, and it was found that a large number of the attendants did not carry a key."

The above extracts do not require much comment. If the methods described are judicious and practicable, surely there is a chance for improvement in the management of American asylums.

